INSIDE IMAGE

APRIL 1993
ISSUE #2

SHAMAN'S TEARS™

MIKE GRELL

IN A TIME OF CHAOS
JOSHUA BRAND
IS JUST WHAT THIS
WORLD NEEDS...
HOLD ON FOR A HERO!

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INSIDE APRIL

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Editor: Eric Stephenson

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Cover Illustration:
Deathblow-regular series
by Jim Lee

Dot Your I And Cross Your T's...

Dear retailers and fans:

Unless you've been living under a rock, you know that the Image group has done it again. First, we fired the bosses, then we stole the really hot artists and now we've abandoned the publisher ... we're taking this business seriously and we're taking it into our own hands.

Image is no longer just a label, its a viable operation and I've stepped in to take control. My name is Tony Lobito, that's "little wolf" to you, and I've been asked to be the leader of the pack. I'm looking forward to this year as we have many new and exciting ideas and we can't wait to put them into action.

We're off to a great start here at Image. The staff and I are looking forward to all the challenges that we will face in the future, most importantly, getting those darn books out ON TIME!!!!! After many conversations with Rob Liefeld, Jim Lee, and Todd McFarlane they have assured me of their commitment to doing their best to get our books out, because they believe they owe at least that to you folks.

This is going to be the hottest year in comic book history and we have got a great new line up of books and hot artists joining the Image team. First of all, joining the creative team are such GIANTS as Alan Moore, Rick Veitch, Steve Bissette, and *the* Jack Kirby. Our new hot rookies are Dan Fraga, Chap Yaep, Scott Clark and Nick Manabat. Keep a watch out for these guys, they easily could become the next Jim Lee, Rob Liefeld or Todd McFarlane. With these rookies taking on some of the work load, Image will soon be back on schedule so all of you can get your Image fix regularly.

Respectfully,

Tony Lobito

Tony Lobito
Publisher

JIM LEE: DEATHBLOW/CYBERNARY

Jim Lee takes some time out of his hectic schedule to talk to Inside Image about his new upcoming series: Deathblow/ Cybernary.

INTERVIEW BY RUTH GRICE

WILDCATS, STORMWATCH, DARKER IMAGE AND NOW, DEATHBLOW. IT'S BEEN A REAL BUSY YEAR FOR YOU.

You're telling me! I'm up to my ears in projects, but I've never been so jazzed about my work. The studio (Homage Studios, where Jim works with Whilce Portacio, Scott Williams and Marc Silvestri, to mention but a few of the names there) is just humming these days; it's a real hotbed of creativity. We're constantly talking about new storylines, concepts and ways to improve the Image line. *Deathblow* essentially takes the character we've introduced in Darker Image and puts him into a larger, more involved story. It also features the adventures of *The Cybernary* which will be drawn by Image rookie Nick Manabat.

WHO'S WORKING ON DEATHBLOW?

Brandon Choi and I are co-writing it and I'm pencilling and inking the series. Joe Chiodo and Mike Heisler are providing their prodigious talents as colorist and letterer, respectively.

DEATHBLOW'S ESSENTIALLY A TOUGH, HARD-NOSED GOVERNMENT ASSASSIN, RIGHT?

Right, he's done a lot of dirty work on behalf of the United States government, all of which is clandestine in nature. Assassinations, infiltrations, abductions, counter-espionage—all that stuff. You see one of his dirtiest missions in Darker Image, but he seeks redemption, salvation, forgiveness for his sins when it becomes apparent in *Deathblow* #1 that he has a terminal disease and very little time to live.

This desire for redemption puts Cray (Deathblow's real name) into contact with a secret order of monks whose life mission is to prepare for the upcoming battle with the Anti-Christ. On top of all this, he ends up teaming up with a tough nun and they act as the champion for a young boy who's revealed to possibly be the second coming.

The series deals with religion, fanaticism, salvation and redemption and has a lot of action, suspense and a little humor as well which is funny because the main story deals with the coming apocalypse.

SOUNDS LIKE AN INVOLVED STORYLINE. IS THIS IS A REGULAR ONGOING BOOK?

Yup. The first story arc will be pretty hefty but I'm doing 8-10 page installments a month on this flip book. The other

story featured in *Deathblow* is called The Cybernary and is a completely different storyline altogether, though I think the two features are bound in tone and grittiness.

I'VE NOTICED FROM DARKER IMAGE THAT YOU'RE DOING A DIFFERENT STYLE FOR DEATHBLOW. WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO DO THAT?

Frank Miller's Sin City. It's gorgeous. I urge any fan to go out and buy it right this minute—you won't regret it! I've loved the fact that Frank has always taken the chance to constantly tinker with and change his artstyle. I've always been impressed with his sense of aesthetics and have been a huge fan of anything he's been involved with.

Sin City's inspired me to explore a style which I've always reserved more for conceptual sketches. My more mainstream work is sleek and uses linework and color to establish depth. I just wanted to play around and explore doing something more visceral, more dramatic. It forces me to think in ways I normally don't, when I do my more cross-hatched style.

WHO'S WORKING ON THE CYBERNARY BACKUP STORY?

Well, it's not a backup story. They'll be, more or less, equal number of story pages for both Deathblow and the Cybernary. Brandon and I are the writers but the art chores are handled by Homage newcomer Nick Manabat who's turning out the best work I've seen from a rookie in years. He's come out of nowhere. Remember his name—he's going straight to the top.

GIVE US SOME MORE INFO ON THIS MYSTERIOUS NICK MANABAT.

Whilce Portacio found or "discovered" Nick in the Philippines when Whilce was making his tour of the country. He's only twenty but he's already drawing rings around me. Nick's storytelling is very dramatic, and his art is evocative and strong. He's got a great sense for design and drama. In fact, he's a co-creator on the project. He's going to really turn some heads.

CAN YOU TELL US WHAT THE CYBERNARY IS ABOUT?

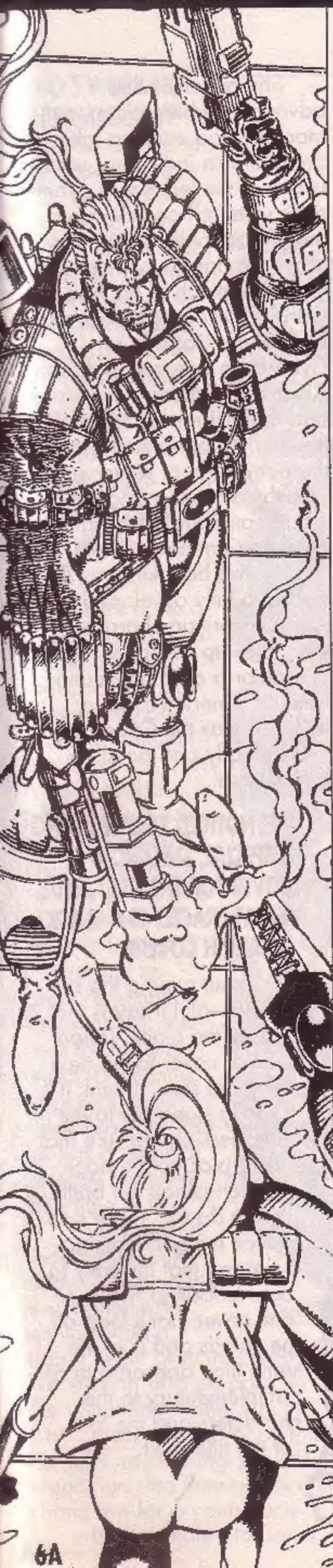
Well, without giving too much away, *The Cybernary* takes place on a fictional island-state in southeast Asia and is about the adventures of a female protagonist who is thrust into the role of the hero when she gives up her humanity to save her best friend.

She becomes this advanced cybernetic assault machine and ends up taking on Gamorra industries, which is one of the leaders in cybernetic research and development. Except their business practices are pretty much boycotted by much of the free world. Their biggest competitor is CyberData, but CyberData operates in North America. Gamorra Industries and the entire island itself are the world's pariahs. It is only the patronage of some very wealthy oil sheiks and third world conglomerates that has allowed Gamorra to hold on.

I'll also be taking my first stab at a fully developed Asian American character who ends up being recruited to Gamorra after graduating from an Americn college; he'll serve as the Cybernary's eventual ally and possible love interest.

I'VE NOTICED YOU'RE DOING A SPECIAL, ENHANCED COVER FOR THE FIRST ISSUE. WHAT EXACTLY IS A BLACK VARNISH COVER?

Without ruining the surprise—all I'll say is that it takes the black Valiant Solar cover to the next logical step. I think it'll really stand out to the readers and ensure that they pick up the book (which is half the battle these days). There's so much material coming out today that it's easy to be overlooked. This is one cover that'll leap off the stands and is at the same time appropriate or complementary to the characters and the tone of the title itself.



DAN FRAGA:

INTERVIEW BYRON RIFE

WHY DON'T YOU START OFF BY GIVING US SOME BACKGROUND ON THE BLOOD BROTHERS CROSS-OVER COMING UP IN BLOODSTRIKE AND BRIGADE.

In *Youngblood #0* and the *Brigade* mini-series, it was established that there was a conflict between Battlestone (the leader of Brigade and former squad leader for Youngblood) and the United States government. At the end of the final issue of the *Brigade* mini-series, there's a scene where the Brigade team is returning to earth after their adventure in space and as they're on their way home, we switch back to earth and see that the government has called in Bloodstrike to take Brigade out.

EXACTLY WHAT IS BLOODSTRIKE'S AFFILIATION WITH THE GOVERNMENT?

Bloodstrike more or less functions as part of the government's internal affairs operation. Basically, we're answering the question of who's supposed to watch over the super-heroes in a world filled with government-sanctioned super-human beings. That's Bloodstrike. The really cool thing about them is they're all dead. They're part of a government experiment called Project: Born Again, which takes the bodies of existing dead soldiers and revives them, giving them extra abilities and what not. Since they're already dead, you can't kill them...which is why they're such a huge asset to the government.

WHY DON'T YOU RUN THROUGH THE CHARACTERS THAT MAKE UP THE BLOODSTRIKE TEAM FOR US.

First off, there's Cabbot. He's the leader of the team and he's an excellent fighter, as well as being pretty handy with just about any weapon. Then, there's Tag and if she touches you, you stop cold—you freeze, just like in the game. Next up is Deadlock and he's the resident kick-butt guy. We've seen him before in *Youngblood* as a member of The Four, but now he's a member of Bloodstrike and there's a whole story behind how he became involved with both teams. Next is Fourplay, which is a nice play on words and she's a real butt-kicker, too, and finally, there's a guy who's probably one of my favorites, despite the fact that I used to have so much trouble drawing him, called Sho-gun. I think he's going to be a sure-fire hit with the readers, because he's just a human tank. He can turn into a rocket or an arsenal of weapons...he really steals the show. Actually, I'm almost forgetting Roam, a character you don't get to see, but who serves as sort of a transport entity, teleporting them wherever they have to go.

BLOODSTRIKE

SO BESIDES SHO-GUN, WHICH ONE OF THESE CHARACTERS IS YOUR FAVORITE?

Well, my *very* favorite character to draw is Cabbot, because I get this uncanny enjoyment out of torturing myself by drawing lots of detailed gear. After Cabbot, I guess I'd have to say Deadlock, because he's just the ferocious beast-man and it's fun to draw a guy who can literally tear people apart.

ASIDE FROM THE FACT THAT THEY'RE DEAD, WHAT SETS BLOODSTRIKE APART FROM OTHER SUPER-HERO TEAMS LIKE BRIGADE OR WILD CATS?

I'd have to say it's because they're a complete team, there are no missing components. In a lot of teams, you've got a big guy who can really fight good, but in Bloodstrike, the big guy also has guns and he can fly, so he's their transport, as well. For short-term transportation, when they can't use Roam, they've got Sho-gun. So you've got a big guy who serves a lot of purposes and two very strong females who play a very big part in the team, which I think is sort of a different approach than is used in most team books. Deadlock functions as the guy who will do anything at any cost to get the job done, which is always good in a pinch and then there's Cabbot serving as the team's anchor in all this. It's a good mix, I think, but the main thing that puts it all in line is that they're dead. You can't beat Bloodstrike, because you can't kill them. They're dead and, short of completely dismembering them, there's no way to stop them.

WHAT TYPE OF STORIES CAN WE EXPECT WHEN BLOODSTRIKE GETS OFF THE GROUND IN APRIL?

The series starts off with Bloodstrike taking down a GATE installation called Jericho. They teleport in and encounter the head of the installation and his support team, but I can't really tell you more than that, because the story has sort of a surprise ending. There's an ad running right now for the new Nintendo Zelda game and it says, "Once you think you've beaten someone, it's just begun" and that's pretty much what happens here. Even after their encounter with this guy, they really haven't done a thing.

From there, we go into the Blood Brothers crossover. The first part is taking place in *Brigade #1* and is drawn by my good friend Marat Mychaels. Brigade arrive back on earth only to be met by Bloodstrike. A battle ensues and Bloodstrike takes out a few of Brigade's members. If you're familiar with the ads we've run for Blood Brothers that have the tag lines "Feel the blood...they did," then you already know what it's all about. Brigade pretty much gets to feel the wrath of Bloodstrike in the story's opener and you'll have to wait and see to find out what happens from there on in.

SINCE YOU MENTIONED THE BLOOD BROTHERS ADS, I HAVE TO ASK IF THE BANNER TITLE "BLOOD BROTHERS" APPLIES TO BATTLESTONE AND CABBOT. ARE THEY REALLY BROTHERS OR...

Well, it's really just a minor detail (laughs), but Cabbot and Battlestone are brothers. Both of them are products of Project: Born Again, although I don't think it's quite as overt with Battlestone. Rob set it all up in *Youngblood #0*, though, and all of it comes together with the Blood Brothers story. I'm really excited about what we've got in store for them.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE CROSS-OVER?

This is something I'm really excited about. The guy who created Lobo and wrote *Legion of the Super-Heroes* and *Justice League*, Keith Giffen, is going to be plotting *Bloodstrike* as of issue three, as well as laying it out. Past the end of the Blood Brothers storyline, I don't really know what's going to be happening, but I do know that we're really in for a joyride, because Keith's just full of ideas. I'm really jazzed about working with him.

DOES ROB LAY YOUR PAGES OUT ON THE FIRST TWO ISSUES?

Yeah, the first two issues are laid out by Rob. Layouts are the little thumbnails that I blow up and work from. Being new at all this, I still have to work a little on my storytelling and that's what layouts are for. I think it's a good way to learn a lot of important stuff about storytelling.

LET'S SHIFT GEARS HERE FOR A SECOND...HOW DID YOU BREAK INTO COMICS?

I met Rob back in '89 at a convention in the Bay area and I showed him my work. I showed my stuff to editors at conventions a lot, but I always thought Rob gave me the best feedback, so I always showed my stuff to him, too. One day, he liked my work a lot and he said, "I'm starting up this company with some other guys and I'd like you to move down to work for me." He was gracious enough to give me a place to live and that's where I'm at right now.

A little later on, once I'd moved down, Rob asked me to do a sample story for him, which ended up being a segment of *Youngblood #0* and, consequently, my first published work.

WHAT ARTISTS DO YOU CONSIDER TO BE YOUR MAJOR INFLUENCES?

Outside of Rob, my two biggest influences are Jim Lee and Art Adams. Art Adams, to me, is the ultimate comic book artist, although now that I think about it, I'd also have to throw John Byrne in there. With Art Adams, though, you get really cool looking people and although he doesn't have a large body of work behind him, everything looks really good. As a kid, I always wanted to look like the guys he drew and I always wished the girls he drew could be my girlfriends. John Byrne, on the other hand just drew really cool poses and he has storytelling down - he got a lot of storytelling from Jack Kirby and he's drawn a lot of characters for both Marvel and DC.

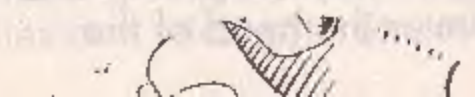
As far as Jim Lee goes, he got started when I was in the prime target group for comics. He and Todd McFarlane just hit me like a ton of bricks.

WERE YOU INVOLVED IN ANY OTHER IMAGE PROJECTS PRIOR TO THE PAGES THAT APPEAR IN YOUNGBLOOD #0?

Not really other projects, but about a year ago, Jim Valentino came over to Extreme Studios and he had some rough sketches for a character he wanted to call Shadowhawk. He gave them to me and Marat (Mychaels) and asked us to kind of play around with it and redesign them for him. I guess he liked it a lot, because that's what you're seeing right now. So, that was a lot of fun, but otherwise, no. That's been about it.

WHAT'S IT LIKE WORKING AT EXTREME STUDIOS?

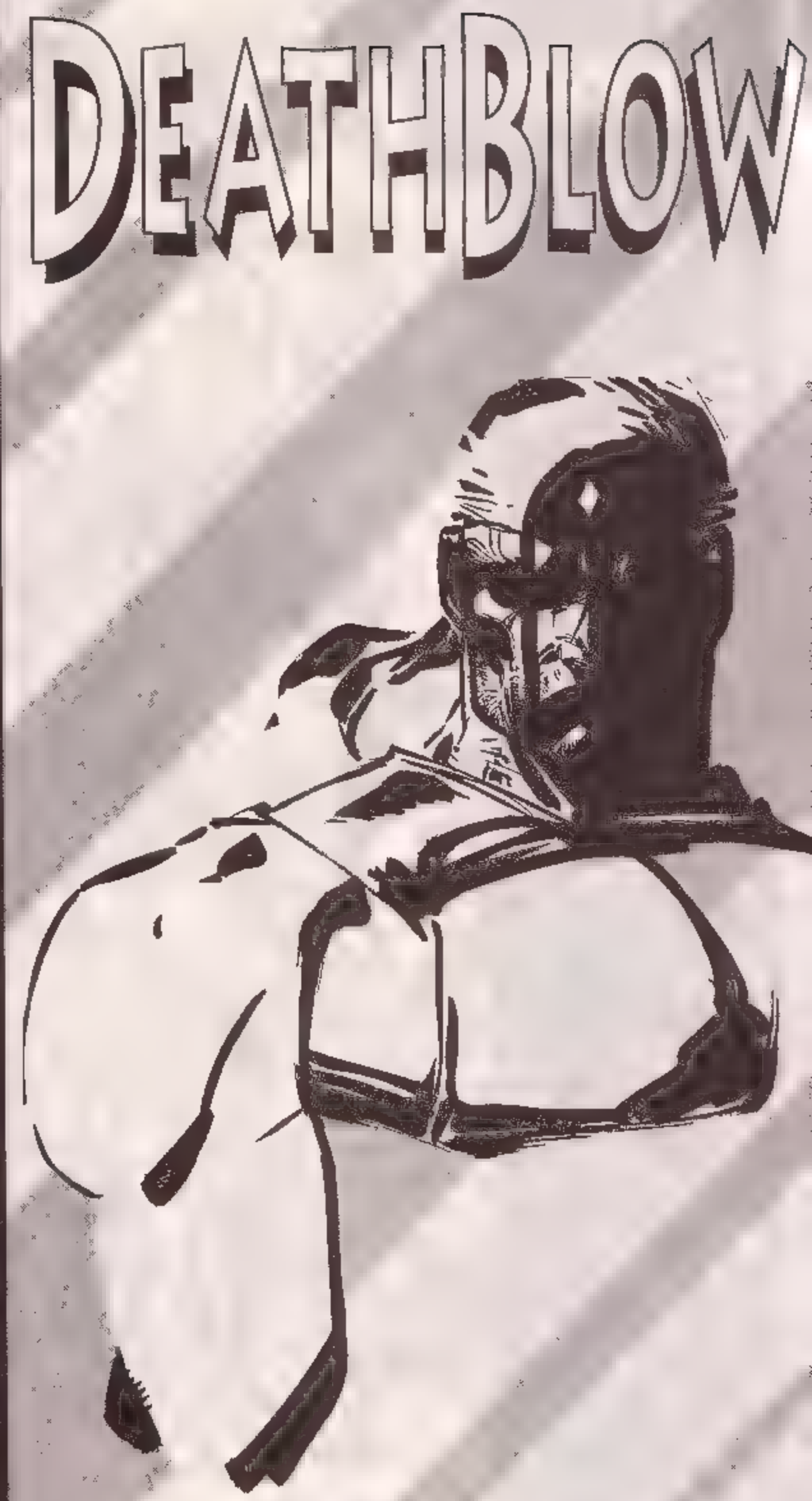
As far as working with Rob goes...I wouldn't want to work with or for anybody else. He has an understanding of how things work after being in the business for five years. He knows which things drive a person in a positive manner and which things don't. He can make me work harder than I might want to if I'm slacking on a page or something. It's really a great situation, because everybody's into pushing everyone else toward doing their best work. When I tell someone I'm going to work, I really should say that I'm going off to have fun with my buddies. It's a really positive environment and I wouldn't want to be anywhere else.



DEATHBLOW #1

$2.50
Color.
Jim Lee/Brandon Choi

Special black varnish cover! Set during Desert Storm, Deathblow is activated by his Control Officer for a covert mission in Baghdad. Upon his arrival at the staging site, however, Cray learns he's been assigned to a CIA special ops team with orders to assassinate Saddam Hussein! And, as if that weren't enough for Cray to worry about, dark and strange nightmares now plague him whenever he sleeps! Plus! A new back-up story by Jim Lee, Brandon Choi and hot new Image rookie Nick Manabat introduces the dark and dangerous world of THE CYBERNARY! It's a world where unimaginable wealth and depravity clash with cutting edge cyber technology in a realm dominated by cyber-punks, cyborg killers and corrupt technocrats. Anyone is welcome, but no one ever leaves!



BLOODSTRIKE #1

$2.50
Color.
Rob Liefeld/Dan Fraga/Danny Miki

Blood Brothers prelude featuring a special thermal spot embossed cover introducing Cabbot, Deadlock, Fourplay, Shogun and Tag. Five unstoppable killing machines who've defied death and now make up the ultra secret task force known as Bloodstrike.

BRIGADE #1

$1.95
Color:
Rob Liefeld/
Marat Mychaels/
Norm Rapmund/
Eric Stephenson

Part I of the five-part Blood Brothers storyline featuring Bloodstrike.

The first issue of the BRIGADE regular series kicks off with a bang as Battlestone & crew return home from space only to walk into an ambush at the hands of Bloodstrike! Also, this issue marks the first of a series of dramatic changes that will affect each and every member of Brigade for years to come beginning with the death of one of their own.

BRIGADE

YOUNGBLOOD: STRIKE FILE #2

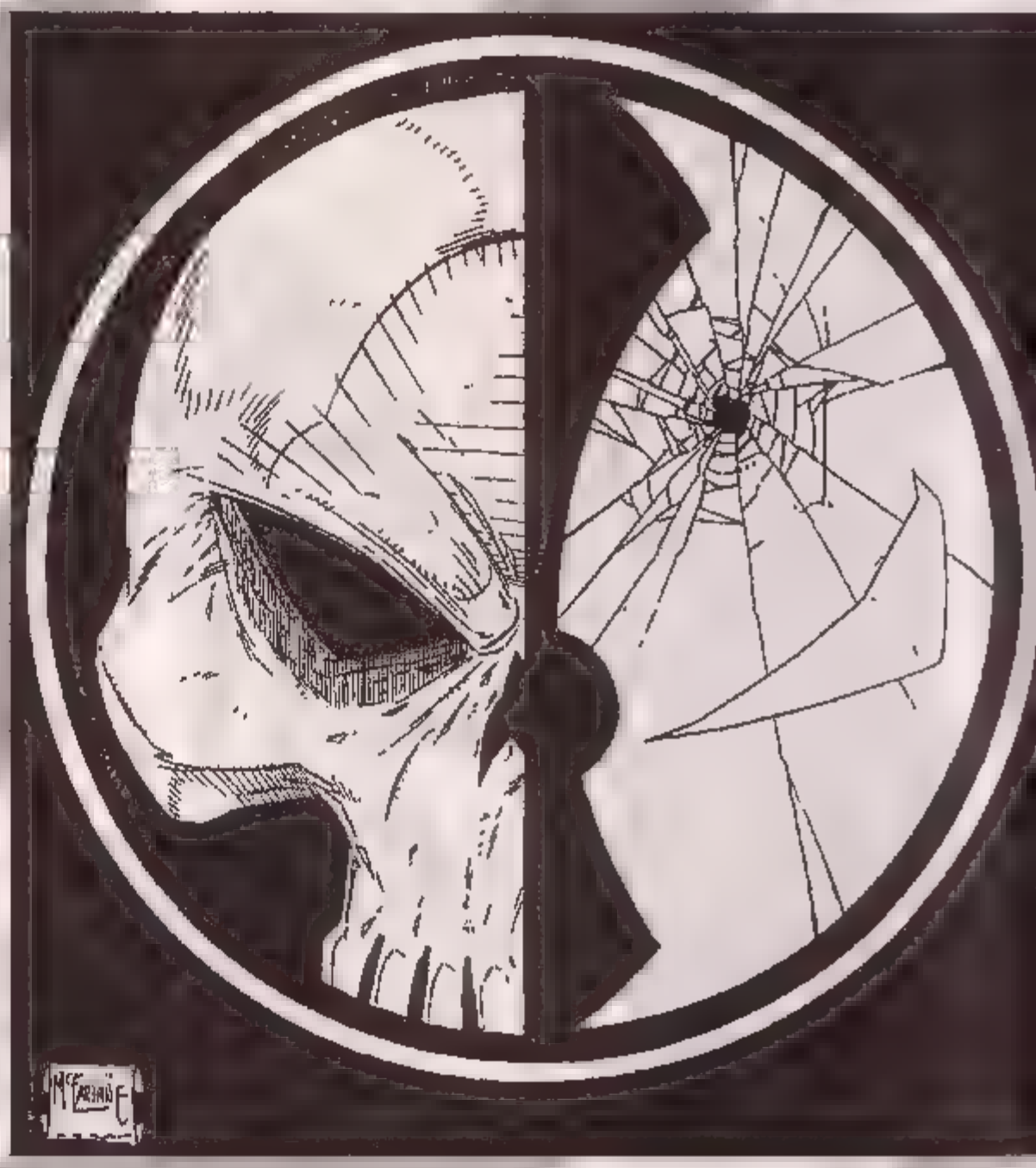
$2.50
Color. (of 4)
Rob Liefeld/ Jae Lee

Special foil embossed split-fold cover in the second issue of this high octane series. Chapel goes head to head with the nefarious Gigor and his cyborg death squad, while Diehard continues his slug-fest with the SAVAGE DRAGON's Super-Patriot! Both stories are by Rob Liefeld with art supplied by Jae Lee (Chapel) and Liefeld himself (Diehard), so this one's sure to fly off the stands! Not to be missed!

SPAWN #12

$1.95
Color,
Todd McFarlane

Part 1 of 2. Revealed at last: The killer of Al Simmons! To this point, we know where he got his power... now he got his powers and why he got his powers - but we don't know who actually killed him or why. Or do we? The startling answer lies into another book from the Image Universe. All the clues have been given. Have you found them all in the previous issues? Spawn finally puts the pieces together himself in this tale of betrayal and vengeance as Todd McFarlane returns to writing for the big conclusion of Spawn's origin.



TRIBE #2

$1.95
Color.
Larry Stroman/
Todd Johnson

More chilling action as hired assassin Out Cold drops the temperature a few degrees on the Tribe crew. Also the Tribe core grows and we learn the origin of Steel Pulse

DARKER IMAGE #4

$1.95
Color. (of 4)
Rob Liefeld/Sean Kleefeld/
Jim Lee

DARKER IMAGE [illegible]

find out for sure

other than Grandma
Bloodwulf to come to his

the middle of the Florida

DARKER IMAGE

THE MAXX #2

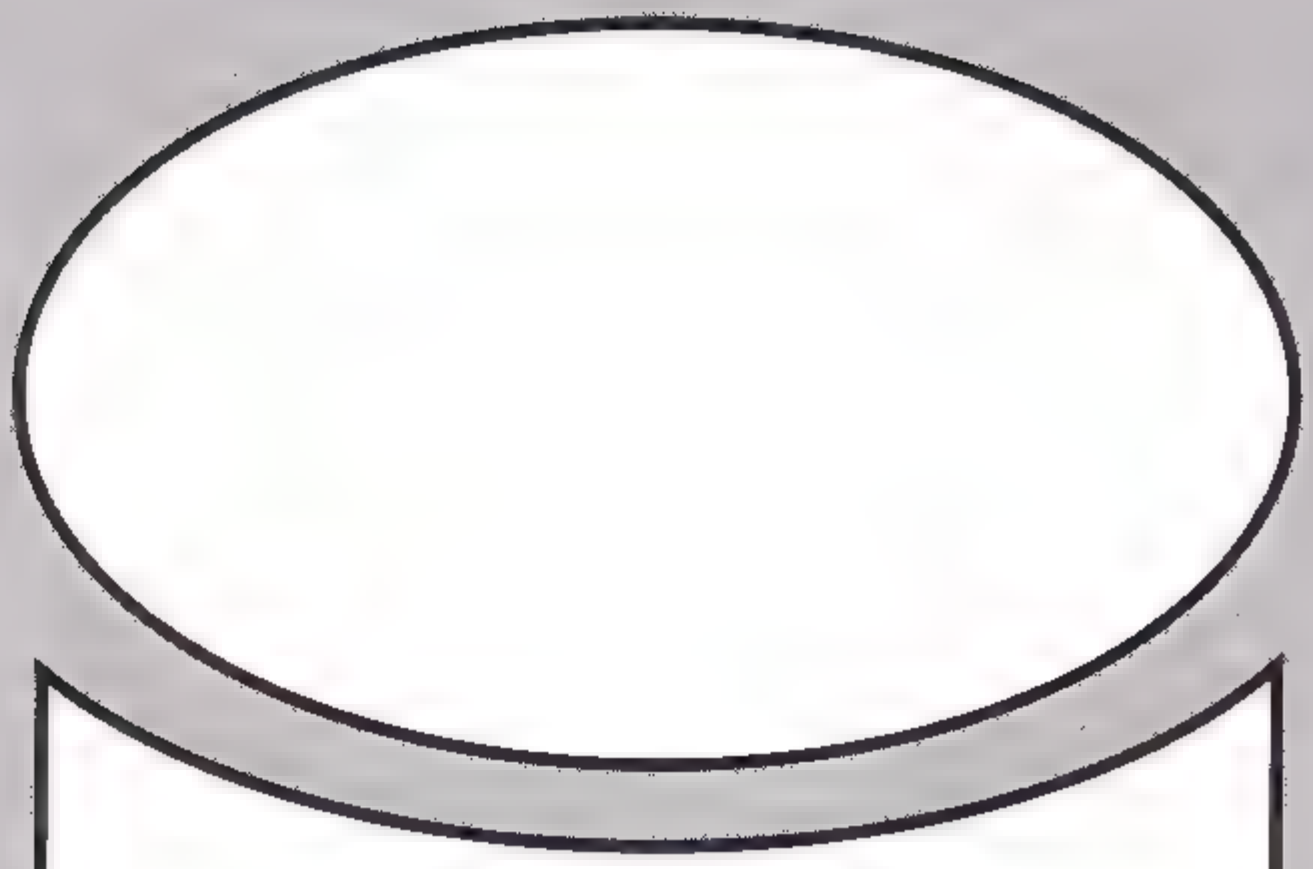
$1.95
Color. (of 4)
Sam Kieth/William Messner-Loebs

The action heats up as the Maxx continues to [illegible] chilling battle atop a [illegible] overpass. Meanwhile, back in the primitive world of the Australian outback, Julia continues to behave more and more erratically, and as too things off with [illegible] Mr. Gone, [illegible] returning to the Maxx as Briar Lapin?

PHANTOM FORCE

BLOOD
BROTHERS

DAN
FRAGA
LIEFELD.



MAXX

YOUNGBLOOD:
STRIKE FILE

UNION

RIPCLAW

PROPHET

IMAGES OF
SHADOWHAWK

1963

VIOLATOR

BLOODSTRIKE

FREAK FORCE

VANGUARD

image

THE PLACE TO BE IN '93

AMERICA'S MOST EXCITING COMIC BOOKS

INSIDE IMAGE

APRIL 1993
ISSUE #7

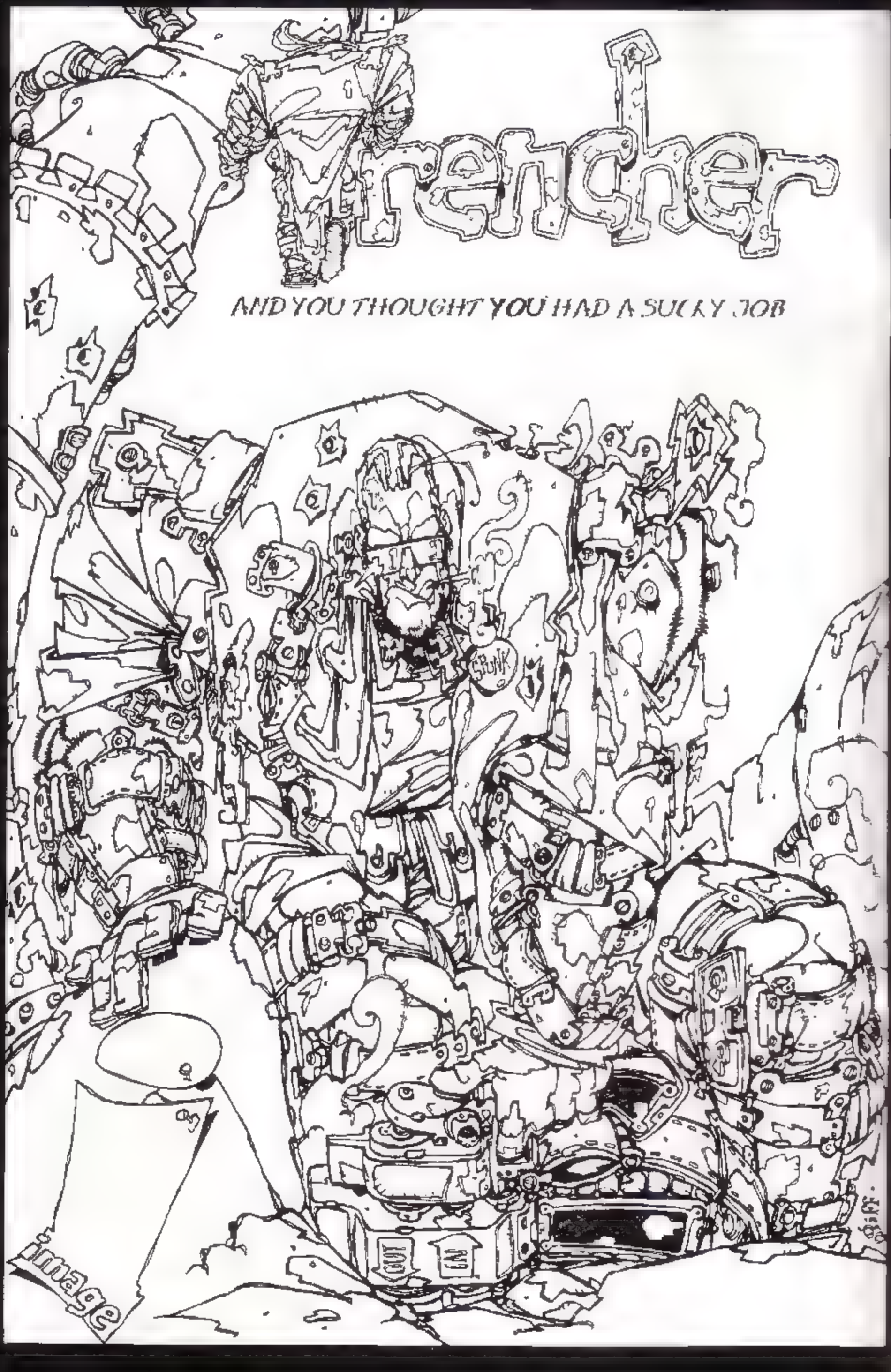
GOLDARN IT, CRYSTAL MAN! OUR OWN HEADQUARTERS IS TRYING TO MURDER US...

...AND IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT!

MAYHEM ON THE MYSTERY MILE!

Wrecker

AND YOU THOUGHT YOU HAD A SUCKY JOB



INSIDE IMAGE

INTERVIEW:
ALAN MOORE, RICK VEITCH,& STEVE BISSETTE: 1963
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INTERVIEW:
JACK KIRBY: THE FORCE IS WITH US
P. 6-8

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STORMWATCH #3 P. 12
SHADOWHAWK TPB P. 13
WILDSTAR #4 P. 14
IMAGE PLUS #1 P. 15

ASK IMAGE P. 16

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Editor: Eric Stephenson

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AMERICA'S MOST EXCITING COMIC BOOK!
MYSTERY INCORPORATED
GOLDARN IT CRYSTAL MAN! OUR OWN HEADQUARTERS IS TRYING TO MURDER US
AND IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT!
MAYHEM ON THE MYSTERY MILE!

IMAGE COMICS GOES BACK TO THE FUTURE

THE UNBELIEVABLE N-MAN FACES A "SHOWDOWN IN THE SHIMMERING ZONE!"

EAGLE'S-EYE CALLING N-MAN! YOU'RE RIGHT ABOVE THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE ULTRA-RADIOACTIVE ZONE WE DETECTED HERE IN YUCCA FLATS!
OPEN YOUR 'CHUTE BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!

AN INTERVIEW WITH ALAN MOORE, RICK VEITCH AND STEVE BISSETTE ABOUT 1963

1963

AMERICA'S MOST EXCITING COMIC BOOK!

MYSTERY INCORPORATED

INSIDE IMAGE: How did *1963* first take shape?

STEVE: Well, it started with Jim Valentino and Larry Marder, *Beanworld* artist and promotional manager for Chicago's Moondog retail store chain. Larry called me and said, "Listen, the Image guys want to get a hold of Alan Moore and the only way they know how to do that is through you. Are you willing to talk to them?" And I said, "Sure."

Jim Valentino called me and asked if Alan and I would want to do an issue of *Shadowhawk*. I let Jim know that I didn't think so; I hadn't drawn comics for some time, much less super-heroes, and Alan had some grave misgivings about the work he did in the super-hero genre, feeling responsible, in part, for the current nihilistic turn they've taken since *Watchmen*—particularly the character of Rorschach. So, I told Jim we probably wouldn't do it since Shadowhawk is, after all, a vigilante character, but that I would call Alan

What Alan and I discussed in that first phone call was a counterproposal to Jim, based on a concept Alan had years prior, which has become the *1963* limited series. We agreed Rick Veitch should be on board with the first conversation, and so I then called Rick and it snowballed from there in a matter of days. It took a little while for Jim and Image to really give a go-ahead, but it had firmed up enough to be announced during the Image panel at San Diego. Both Dave Gibbons and Don Simpson expressed a strong interest once they'd heard about it, because the *idea* of it, and what Alan might do with it, was so appealing

INSIDE IMAGE: Alan, why have you returned to writing super-hero comic books now?

MOORE: Besides the fact that Steve Bissette called and asked me? (laughs) It's a number of things, not the least of which is the financial considerations. The subjects I was exploring in projects like *Big Numbers*, *Lost Girls* and *From Hell* — Jack the Ripper, Alice in Wonderland in Austria during 1913, a

shopping mall being built in Northampton — they are probably *not* the most commercial ideas I've ever had in my life! I've never been able to consider working again for DC or Marvel in any capacity since turning my back on them many years ago. I will only work with creative publishers, and ones that allow me to own my own work Although my aesthetics are different than theirs, I admire what the people at Image are doing. They've shaken up the industry in a very brutal way, and I think probably shaken it up for the better.

But when they approached me through Steve, I didn't know whether I had any interest at all in doing super-heroes again. I simply wouldn't do a super-hero book again unless there was something in there I could find interesting. Because even though I said money was a consideration, I have *never* done anything purely for the money. If I couldn't find a way to enjoy the project, then I wouldn't do it.

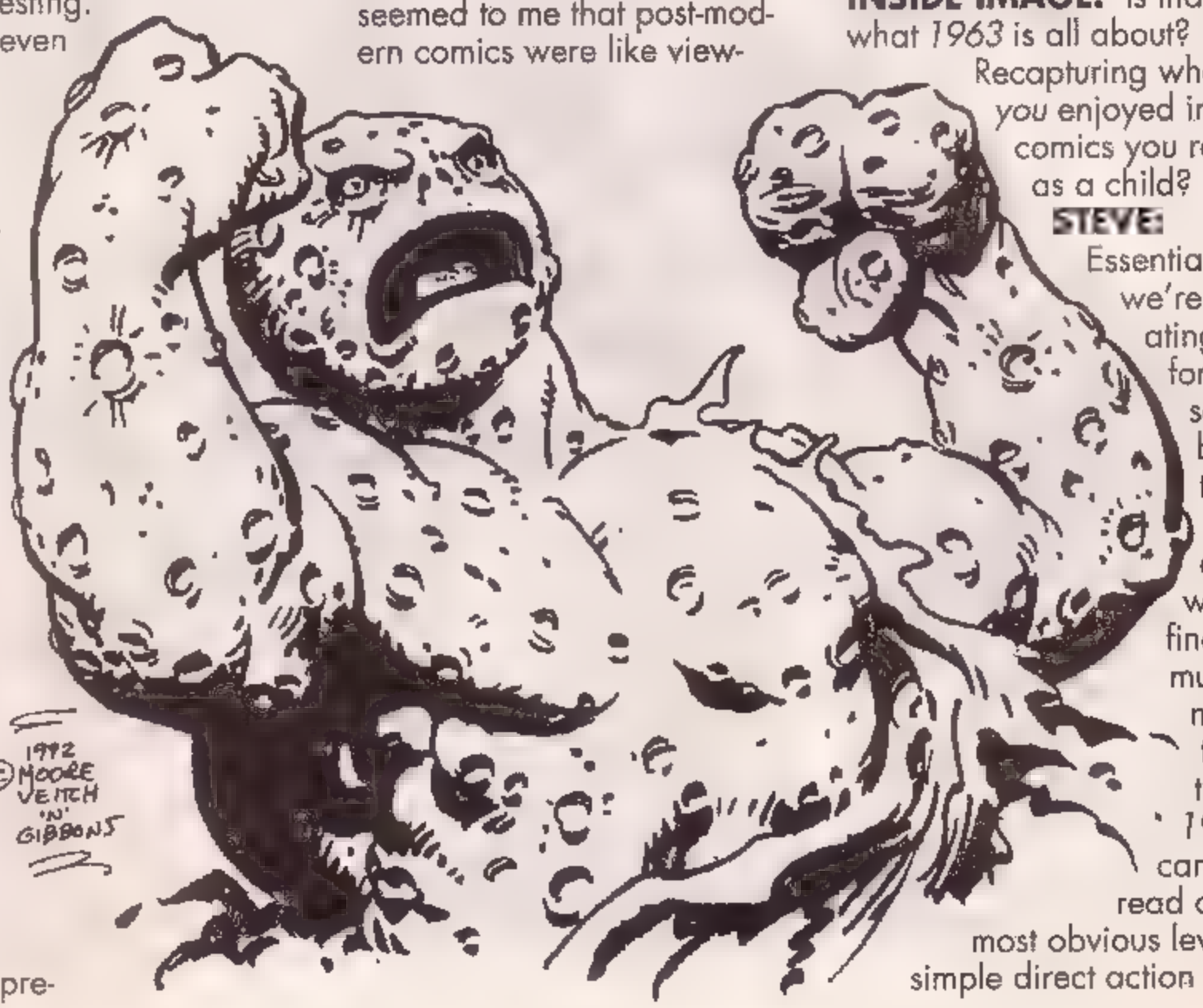
"1963 Is A Statement About Super-heroes, From Their Humble And Simplistic Beginnings To The Complex And Cynical Brand Of Super-heroes That Are State-of-the-art These Days."

sented a problem in that after *Watchmen* and *Miracleman* I had become pretty thoroughly sick of super-heroes. I had become particularly sick of the post-modern super-heroes that followed in their wake. It seemed to me that post-modern comics were like viewing a distorted mirror at a fun-fair, where you go in and see these grotesque looking things and you think, "My God, that's me!" That was the feeling I got reading some of these comics: I could see stylistic elements that had been taken from my own work, and used mainly as an excuse for more prurient sex and more graphic violence.

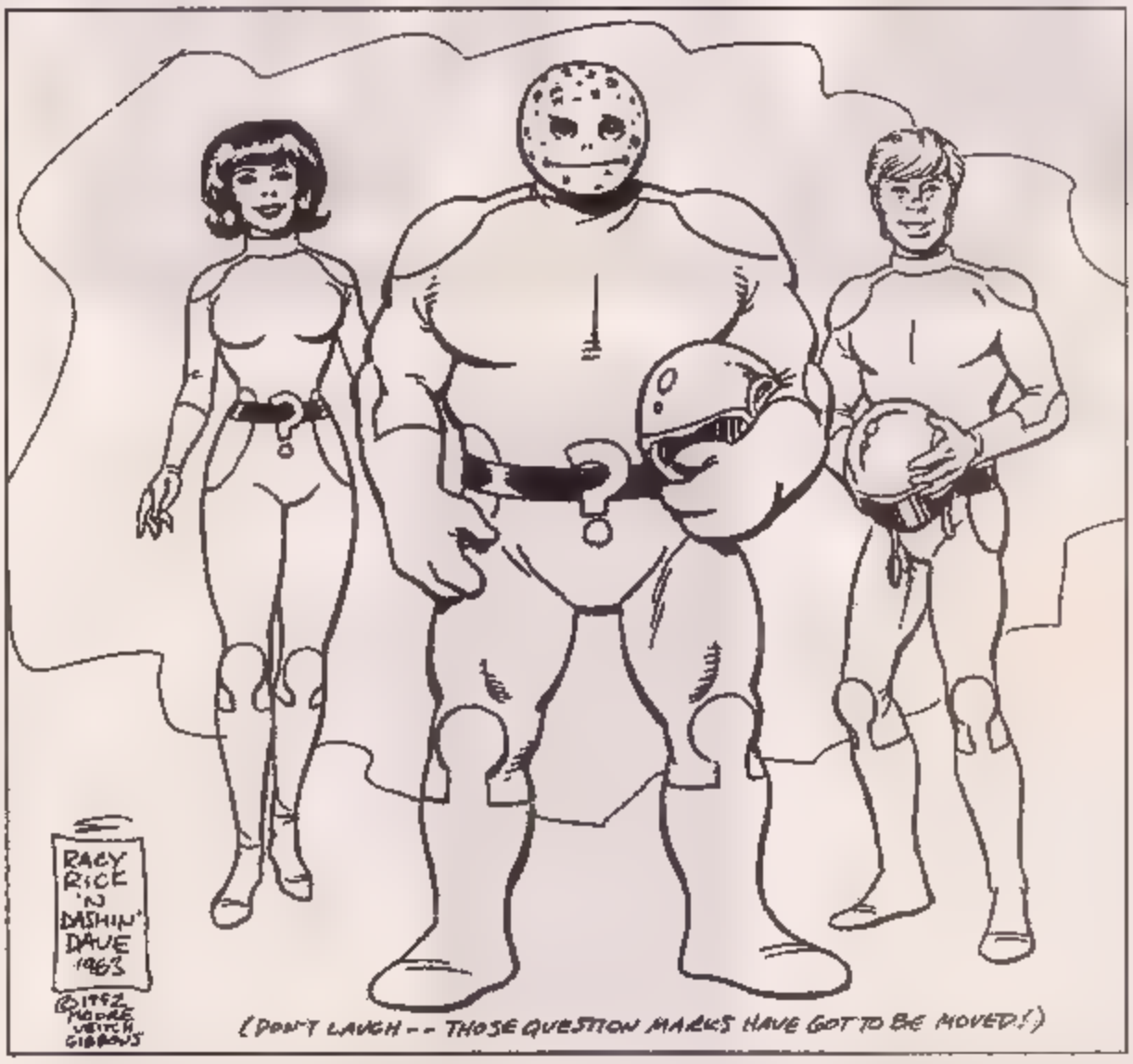
Now, everywhere I turn, there are these psychotic vigilantes dealing out death mercilessly, with none of the irony that I had hoped I brought to my characters. So I felt a bit depressed in that it seemed I had unknowingly ushered in a new *dark age* of comic books. There was none of the delight, freshness and charm that I remembered of the comics from my own youth. It struck me as a terrible shame.

INSIDE IMAGE: Is that what *1963* is all about? Recapturing what *you* enjoyed in the comics you read as a child?

STEVE: Essentially, we're recreating that for ourselves, but I think readers will find much more than that. *1963* can be read on its most obvious level, as simple direct action super-



hero adventures executed with all the energy and skill we can muster. Most of our readers will probably enjoy them on that level. Others may approach the series with a sense of nostalgia for the comics of their youth, and Alan is quite overtly appealing to that by writing the editorial and letter pages in the style of the early 60's comics, along with ads for other imaginary books in the line, recreating the sense that *you*, the reader are in on the ground floor of this new world.



RICK: I think the other level that has evolved as we've come into this, is, the amazing growth in the minds of the audience out there of Image Comics itself. It seems to be a phenomenon that is catching fire with comic readers where they're almost creating this company: They really *want* it to happen; they're behind it 500%. And here we are with the whole *1963* line, providing Image with a past that integrally locks into the Image Universe of 1993.

STEVE: Yes, and that will become more obvious with the 80-page giant annual, which Alan is orchestrating with some of the Image creators, along with the *1963* team. There's something else going on here, too. I think by so directly embodying the values of the comics of the early 60's in the *1963* stories and art, we are *questioning* those values in a manner that is as amusing as the roller-coaster ride the comics take you on.

RICK: *1963* is a statement about super-heroes, from their humble and simplistic beginnings to the complex and cynical brand of super-heroes that are state-of-the-art these days. The evolution of the genre, from what it was to what it is now, is what makes *1963* work for me. The stark contrast between its beginnings and its current state are going to be right there for everyone to look at.

INSIDE IMAGE: Judging by what we've seen of *1963*, you've all had a lot of fun with this project.

STEVE: It got me back into drawing comics! Yeah, it's been a blast.

RICK: I really feel we've created the spirit of "the studio" I had in my mind as a child when I read those old comics. It probably wasn't the truth — I'm sure Kirby, Lee and Ditko were driven completely bonkers by the process of putting out the comics. But when you read those comics, you got the feeling that they all lived in a big house and they all worked in a big studio and they had all these comics and it was really neat. So, although Steve, Alan, Dave Gibbons, Don Simpson, John Totleben, Jim Valentino, Chester Brown and I don't all live in the same house, I do feel a real sense of spirit in this work.

ALAN: *1963* has been a great deal of fun. It's given me a great burst of energy that has been very refreshing in the midst of more demanding projects. It's a bit like customarily working in a symphony orchestra, but playing in a bubble-gum band on weekends. And it's plugged me back into some of the reasons why I became involved in comics in the first place.

THE FORCE IS WITH US

AN INTERVIEW WITH JACK KIRBY

BY RICHARD FRENCH & DAVID SCHWARTZ

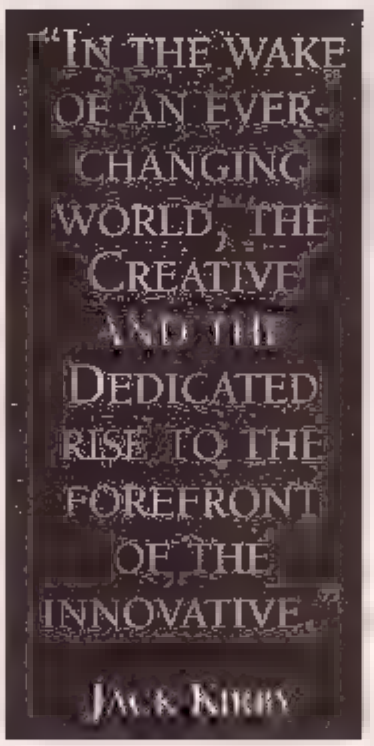
For many new comic readers, the name Jack Kirby may not have much significance. After all, Jack hasn't actively produced comics in almost a decade and a lot has happened in the industry during that time. For those who don't realize it, though, Jack Kirby is arguably the SINGLE most important figure in the history of comics.

Now, if Jack's name sounds a bit familiar to you, but you still can't quite figure out what all the fuss is about, then maybe you don't realize all of the projects Jack has been involved with during his lengthy career. For example...

Since the 1940's, Jack has either created or co-created *Captain America, The Fantastic Four, The New Gods, The Incredible Hulk, The X-Men, Thor, Dr. Doom, The Challengers Of The Unknown, Mister Miracle, Kamandi, The Boy Commandos, The Demon, Omac, Sgt. Fury, Fighting American, Captain Victory and The Silver Surfer.*

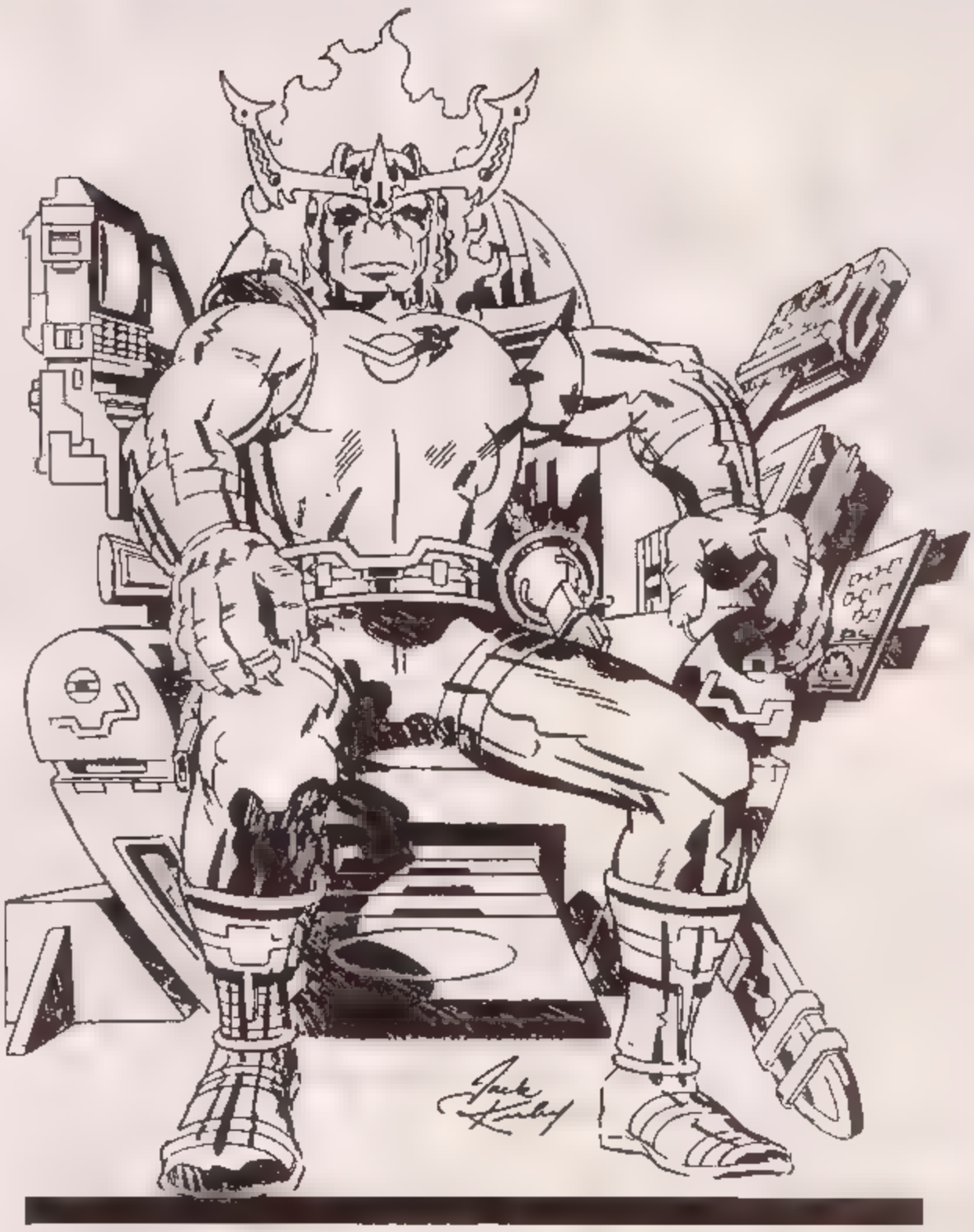
We could go on and on, as there are many more characters that were lovingly brought to life by this comic book genius, but the ones cited here should give you a fairly good idea of the remarkable career this man has led.

And now, after a career of highs that's not likely to be surpassed by any one individual, Jack Kirby has joined forces with Image Comics to bring one of his latest creations - *Phantom Force* - to the public. Created by Kirby, along with long time friend Michael Thibodeaux (creator of Genesis West's *Lost Of The Viking Heroes*) and Richard French, the history of this project goes back to the late 1970's when Thibodeaux first began doing inking and airbrush work for Jack. Jack, Mike and Richard worked together on developing two comic book concepts, which would have cross-over ties with one another and their ideas eventually evolved into *Phantom Force* and *Rush* (an upcoming title from Genesis West). At the time, though, their busy schedules prevented them from bringing their ideas to their ultimate fruition.



Enter Rob Liefeld and Image Comics. While at the 1992 San Diego Comic Con, Rob expressed an interested in publishing *Phantom Force* through Image as a tribute to Jack's lifetime of achievements. After looking over Jack's pencils, Rob became excited by the power and creativity of the work. Rob and the rest of the Image crew instantly saw this as the perfect opportunity to pay thanks to Jack, while at the same time introducing a whole new generation to the magic of Jack Kirby.

As Rob commented at the time, "It would be great to enlighten the unfamiliar readers out there with the power behind Jack Kirby's artwork."



INSIDE IMAGE: Who originally created *Phantom Force*?

THIBODEAUX: The initial concept and characters were created some fifteen years ago by myself and Richard French. We would work together for hours creating new comic concepts.

INSIDE IMAGE: How did you get involved with this endeavor, Jack?

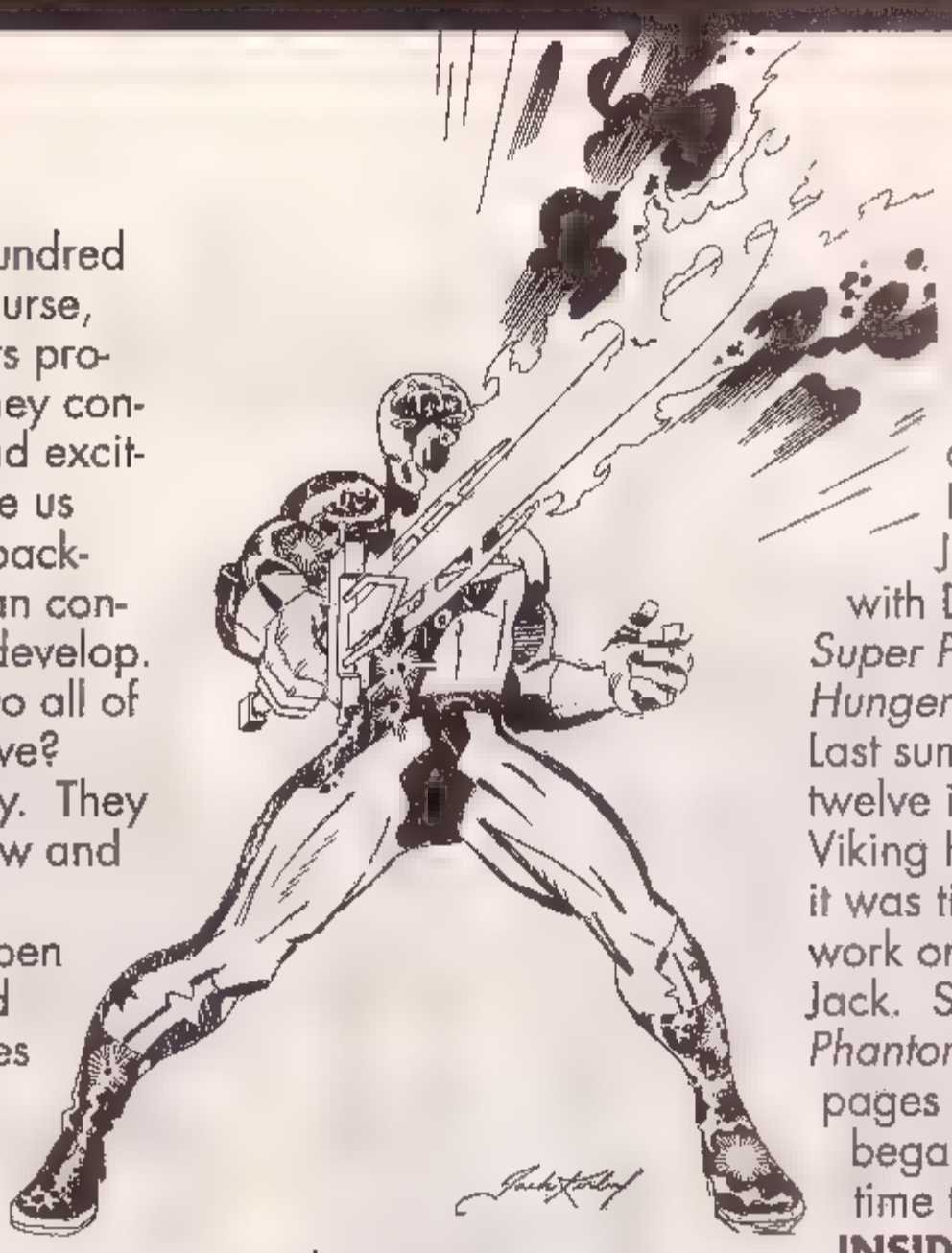
KIRBY: When Mike first showed me his initial concept for the characters, I wanted to be involved. I thought it was a great idea and together, we re-worked the concept and began to really develop it.

THIBODEAUX: One day while visiting Jack, I started discussing our new concepts with him and asked if he had any ideas to help us improve it. Well, asking Jack Kirby for a few ideas is like asking Babe Ruth for a few home runs. Before I knew it, Jack had come up with a whole universe of characters and story ideas. Jack and I came up with new names, more characters, different powers, multiple story plots and cross-over features. It was amazing to be sitting there and hear Jack come up with new idea after new idea. And remember, I only asked for a few ideas. By the time we finished, we had so many ideas and concepts that we could have started ten books.

INSIDE IMAGE: Do you always get carried away like this?

KIRBY: I didn't get carried away. A story needs to be new and innovative. We just look for ways to expand the initial concepts that tie it all in together. That's why the *Phantom Force* will eventually deal with *White Star Knight, The Star Slavers* and even *Mystiko*, an ancient Egyptian technician, who are all characters in *Rush*. We even have a tie-in with Mike's *Last Of The Viking Heroes*. I wouldn't call that getting carried away. It's what you need to do to create a comic book that has depth to it and tells a satisfying story.

THIBODEAUX: Jack added such power ana completeness to the original idea that he made the



whole concept a hundred times better. Of course, when the characters progressively evolve they continue to be fresh and exciting. And Jack gave us enough character background that they can continually grow and develop.

INSIDE IMAGE: Do all of the characters evolve?

KIRBY: Continually. They will continually grow and evolve. But major changes don't happen overnight. It should take about ten issues before the reader starts to see how everything fits together.

INSIDE IMAGE: Does something special happen to make these changes?

KIRBY: A lot of special things happen throughout the series. But the specifics of what happens is a secret. What I can say, is that Sensei plays an important role in how Apocalypse and Probe reach their Final Form.

INSIDE IMAGE: Do you have any favorites out of the *Phantom Force* characters?

KIRBY: I like them all! They're all great! Take for instance, DARKFIRE! He is like this creature from hell, but from another galaxy. And PROFESSOR KUBLAK has the mixture of many species with intelligence! I see Kublak and Susie as a type of Beauty and the Beast. You see, Susie represents the innocent, and Kublak represents our fears. Both can be good,

it's all how we look at it.

INSIDE IMAGE: Mike said *Phantom Force* was initially conceived over fifteen years ago...Why did it take so long to be completed?

KIRBY: Prior obligations and deadlines. Before we finished developing the characters, I started working on *Captain Victory* and *Silver Star* for Pacific Comics and Mike was doing much of the inking, so *Phantom Force* was put on the shelf.

THIBODEAUX: Also at the time, I was hired to do several back-up stories of my *Last Of The Viking Heroes*, so we were both very busy. But even during that period we were still finding a little time here and there to work on our two concepts, *Phantom Force* and *Rush*.

INSIDE IMAGE: What kept you from going back to *Phantom Force* after Pacific collapsed?

THIBODEAUX: By that time I was heavily focused on doing my Viking Heroes book, and Jack was off working with DC. Comics on *Super Powers* and *The Hunger Dogs* (New Gods) Last summer, I finished the twelve issue series of the Viking Heroes and thought it was time to get back to work on our projects with Jack. So I dusted off the *Phantom Force* and *Rush* pages we'd started and began devoting all my time to these projects.

INSIDE IMAGE: Jack, you're obviously enjoying working on *Phantom Force* with Mike and the folks at Image - what are you doing for fun these days?

KIRBY: I'm retired now and am just enjoying myself in the slow lane. I worked so hard for so long that it's just great to sit back and relax. But it is great to see *Phantom Force* finally moving forward.

INSIDE IMAGE: Now that you're teamed up with them, what's your general impression of Image?

KIRBY: They're a great bunch of guys. I really respect them for having the courage and tenacity to leave Marvel and start their own business. I'm glad to be associated with them.

PHANTOM FORCE #1

$2.50
Color: (of 3)
Kirby/Liefeld/McFarlane/
Lee/Larsen
Cover by Jack Kirby
& Rob Liefeld

[redacted]
of Phantom Force #1
[redacted]
three-issue mini-series is
[redacted]
McFarlane, Jim Lee, Erik
[redacted]
Liefeld, McFarlane, Lee
and Larsen.

1963 #1: MYSTERY, INC.

$1.95
Color. (of 6)
Alan Moore/Rick Veitch/
Dave Gibbons

you on breathtaking jour-

of the

963

Planet, Neon Queen and

1963
MYSTERY INCORPORATED!
HA! I DID IT! I BUSTED INTO MYSTERY INCORPORATED'S MILE-LONG UNDERGROUND FORTRESS!
HERE'S WHERE THE FUN REALLY BEGINS
HANG ON TO YOUR SEATS, DEVOTED ONES! IT'S ACTION ALL THE WAY IN THE '63 STYLING STYLE -- SAY NO MORE!
M'AYHEM ON MYSTERY MILE!

WILD C.A.T.S TPB

$9.95
Color.
Jim Lee/Brandon Choi/
Scott Williams

Reprinting all four issues of the WILDC.A.T.S mini-series, with additional pin-ups and art by Jim Lee. Plus 12-page black-and-white preview of the WILDC.A.T.S ongoing series along with the debut of the Daemonites and their Cabal and features a never before seen gallery of cover WILDC.A.T.S sketches. Plus, as a special bonus, WILDC.A.T.S fan-fiction WILDC.A.T.S TPB will come polybagged with a copy of WILDC.A.T.S #0 written by Jim Lee and Brandon Choi and featuring art by newcomer Brett Booth!

WILDC.A.T.S
COVERT-ACTION-TEAMS
TRADE PAPERBACK

STORMWATCH #3

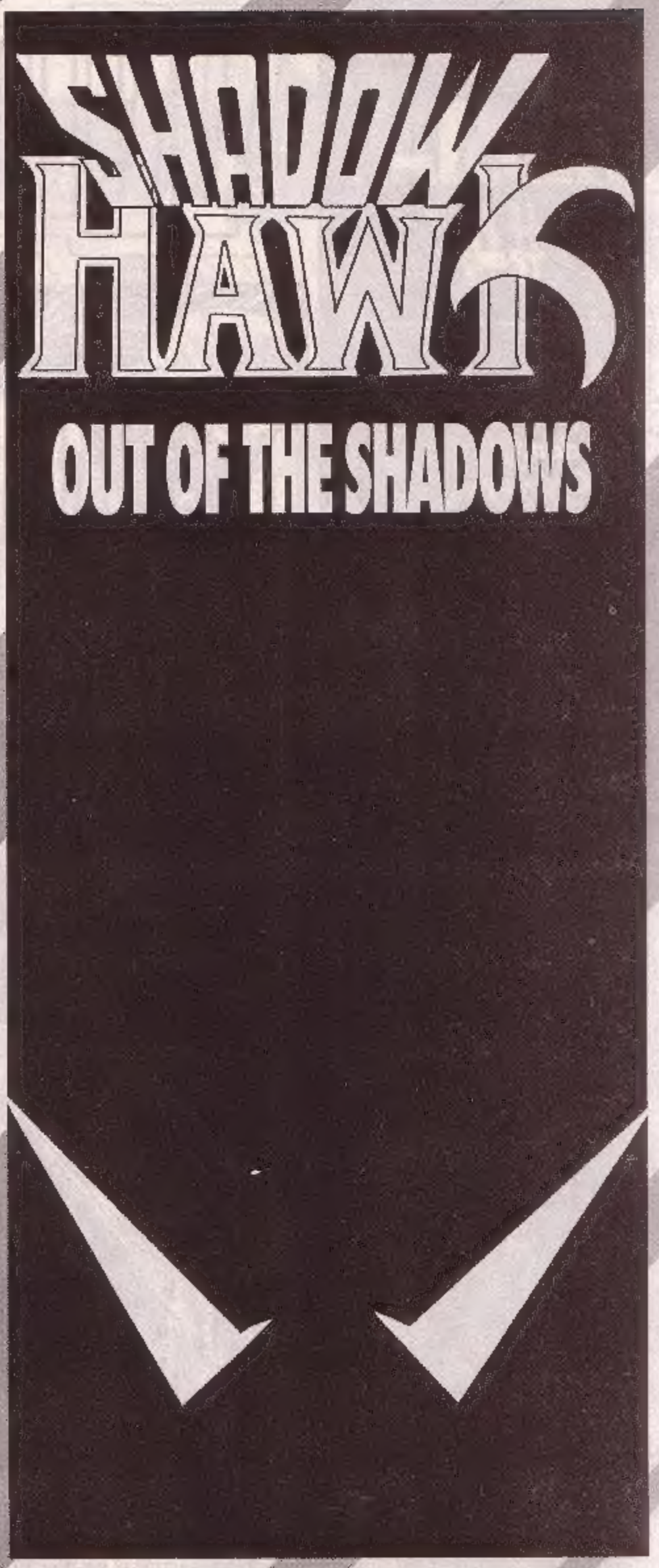
$1.95
Color:
Jim Lee/Brandon Choi/
Scott Clark/Trevor Scott

New family secrets are revealed as Stormwatch battle with the Mercs [illegible] at the Chernobyl nuclear [illegible] just might end up joining the ranks of StormWatch [illegible] the final coupon in a set of [illegible] redeemable for the Limited Edition StormWatch trading card drawn by Jim Lee.

SHADOWHAWK: OUT OF THE SHADOWS TPB

$19.95
Color.
Jim Valentino

This 136-page trade paperback collects every appearance to date of Image Comics' most mysterious hero, including the much sought after issues #1-4 and the short stories from YOUNGBLOOD #2, OPERATION:URBAN STORM and IMAGE COMICS #0! Plus, a special bonus feature showcases the Shadowhawk that might have been as envisioned by fan-favorite artist Mark Texeira! Wrapped in a cover utilizing both silver embossing and red holo-foil, this super-special full-color extravaganza is guaranteed to jump right off the stands and into your face, just as the cover to #1 did!



WILDSTAR #4

$1.95
Color. (of 4)
Al Gordon/
Jerry Ordway

With time running out, can a very dead Wildstar find the last piece of the puzzle that can prevent the future from becoming a thing of the past? When you wish upon a star... expect all hell to break loose!

IMAGE PLUS #1

$2.25
B&W. (one-shot)
Kim Kolomyjec

This poly-bagged one-shot features everything you'd ever want to know about the seven founders of Image comics, including personal information on all your favorite Image artists and tips on breaking into the comics industry. Also included is exclusive Image Fan Club information, as well as an entry form for a contest in which the grand prize is a dinner with SPAWN creator and artist Todd McFarlane! A must for your Image Comics collection!

image+ image

ASK IMAGE

C/O Image Comics, P.O. Box 7071
Fullerton, California 92634

Dear Image,

I'd like to congratulate all of you on your tremendous success during 1992, which will hopefully translate into continued success during 1993 and the years to come. As a junior in college, I have to say that I'd thought my days of reading and collecting comics were just about over, but Image has made me excited about comics all over again. I can't remember the last time I looked forward to each month's comics so much!

Which coincidentally brings me to probably my only real complaint about Image thus far, and that's the fact that I do have to wait so long for each issue to come out. I mean, *Spawn* is the closest thing you guys have to a regular monthly comic and by my estimation it only comes out every six to seven weeks. As long as the books are consistently as good as they've been, it's not that big a deal, but I do hope you get this under control in the new year.

Besides that, though, I couldn't be happier about your plans for Image's second year on the market. I heard that Jae Lee is going to be doing a Youngblood story featuring Chapel and between that and the new *Wildstar* series, I'm pretty psyched up for the new season. Just keep pumping the cool comics out and you've got an Image fan for life!

Adrian Birch
Santa Cruz, CA

Thanks for the encouraging words, Adrian. We're sorry about the constant delays in scheduling during our first year, Adrian, but you've got our solemn promise that things will be improving during 1993.

Dear Image,

I've been collecting Image comics since *Youngblood #1* and I think all your books are great (especially *Spawn* and *Wild CATS*, but I would like to know what the deal is with "Extreme Studios" this and "Homage Studios" that? A friend of mine told me that half of Image is "Extreme" and the other half is "Homage," what's the real story on this?

Danny Arbello
Jersey City, NJ

Extreme Studios basically encompasses all of the titles produced by Rob Liefeld - such as Youngblood and Supreme - and is made up of Rob, Marat Mychaels, Dan Fraga, Danny Miki, Brian Murray and all the other talented people who work on the Extreme titles. Homage, on the other hand, is comprised of Jim Lee, Marc Silvestri, Whilce Portacio , Scott Williams and a host of others who work on titles such as WildCATS, Cyberforce, StormWatch, etc. The other Image guys - Todd McFarlane, Erik Larsen and Jim Valentino don't work in "studios" as such. So, no, Image isn't one half Homage and one half Extreme. Hope that answers your question, Danny.

Dear Image,

I really love Image! Not only has it constantly put out quality comics done by today's biggest talents, but it also allows the creators to put out books with themes I never thought they would delve into. Your new title, *Supreme*, is a good example.

In *Youngblood*, you gave us a new look at a super-team that wasn't so much a team of heroes as it was a celebrity strike force. *Shadowhawk* lets us take a look into the mind of a vigilante even more twisted than Marvel's Punisher and *The Savage Dragon* put a whole new twist on the whole "man/monster." *Supreme* is even more revisionist. Even though he wears a traditional costume and may look like a traditional super-hero, his attitude and personality certainly set him apart from the other heroes of his ilk. And since the Image Universe is filled with a number of "standard" super-hero types, what will Supreme's reaction to them be? Will he disdain them as he did Youngblood or will he be indifferent toward them? I would particularly like to see Supreme go a few rounds with Spawn, my other favorite Image character.

Anyway, I just wanted to commend you on the great work you're doing out there. Thanks for *Supreme* - I'll be buying it regularly, along with all of the other Image titles. Keep up the great work!

Robert Shireman
Fayetteville, NC

Glad you liked Supreme, Robert. All of your questions will be answered as the series progresses - and you can be certain that Supreme will run into Spawn before too long.